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ADVANCING THE ARTS ACROSS MARYLAND

## Kwame Ansah-Brew

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### ARTIST INFORMATION

**COUNTY**

Anne Arundel County

**PHONE**

240-483-9260

**EMAIL:**[info@pacafricancultures.org](mailto:info@pacafricancultures.org)**ARTIST WEBSITE**<http://www.pacafricancultures.org>**ARTIST REPRESENTATION (GALLERY, BOOKING AGENT, PUBLISHER)**<http://www.pacafricancultures.org>**ARTISTIC CATEGORY**Music, Performing Arts,  
Traditional Arts

## ARTIST BIO

KWAME ANSAH-BREW

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### OBJECTIVE:

To perform and teach the theory and practice of Storytelling traditions, African dance and African traditional music aesthetics. To promote cross-cultural understanding, and to guide students in developing a positive attitude and appreciation towards these art forms

### EDUCATION

**Master of Arts, Dance, Africana Studies** (2003)

State University of New York, Brockport

**Diploma in Theater Arts**, (1991 - 1994)

School of Performing Arts University of Ghana, Legon.

**Teacher Certificate 'A'** (1988 - 1991)

University of Cape Coast, Presbyterian Training College, Akropong, Ghana.

**Traditional Master "Divine" Drummer** (1977-1994)

Chief musician of the Royal Court of the Right Wing Chief of Akyem Abuakwa Kingdom, Asiakwa, Ghana.

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Adjunct Professor** (January 1997 - 2014)

African Drum and Dance Ensemble, Goucher College, Towson, MD.

1.5-credit course, meets twice a week. Lectures includes the use of audio/visual aids,

Practical demonstration of musical instruments, dance movements, and historical background.

- **Adjunct Professor** (2006-present)

3.00 credit course, Comparative African Religion at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

3.00 credit course, Introduction to African Dance at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

3.00 credit course, Introduction to Black Music at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

- **Steering Committee Member/Study Tour Leader** (December 1997 - January 1998); December

**2008-January 2009**

Three-week intensive study tour in Ghana for students of Goucher College.

- **Instructor** (September 1996 - May 1997)

Sankofa Dance Company, State University of New York, Brockport

Field work program exploring authentic African traditional dance and drumming.

- **Instructor** (each Fall Semester since 1995-2001)

African Humanities, George Washington University, Washington DC

African music, dance and storytelling.

- **Instructor** (July 1996)

Crown College, St. Bonifacious, Minnesota.

A five-day intensive program on African drumming for graduate-level ethnomusicology students.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **Founder/President (2014-Present) Performing Arts Center For African Cultures, Inc. (PACAC)**

A Non-Profit organization that exists to promote a better understanding of the various African cultures in a

fun and interesting learning environment.

- **Founder and Band Leader** (2006-present) **FRITETE** Afrobeat is a fusion of African instruments accessing the deep, primordial pulse-beats of the most ancient African nations, and fusing them with the instruments of European society at the peak of its cultural sophistication, the Fritete Afro Jazz Band touches its listeners at the core and raises their spiritual connection to new levels with every note!

### **Founder and Artistic Director** (1997 - present)

Fritete African Drum and Dance Ensemble: featuring the authentic African rhythms and dances of antiquity.  
*Performance highlight:* Ensemble was engaged as the Royal Drummers of the Asante King, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II during his visit to the United States in 2001.

- **Co-Director** (1994 - present)

### **Anansegromma of Ghana**

Company shares and imparts the African heritage through African dance, drumming,

folk songs, games and creative dramatics. Organizes numerous workshops for institutions with a specialty in working with children. We have performed in over 350 schools in the United States.

- **Actor** (1998 - 2003)

"Grandmother's Footsteps" at the Barns of Wolf Trap, Vienna, VA

Presenting African dance and creative dramatics to Pre-K students.

- **Participating Artist** (1999 - 2008)

Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts

Arts program for three-to-five year olds. Workshops and seminars for teachers.

Seven-week dance residencies in selected Baltimore City head starts and public schools.

- **Performer** (February 1998)

Black History Month program, Harmony Hall Regional Center, Fort Washington, MD

An introduction to West African culture via dance, drumming, singing, and storytelling.

- **Percussionist** (December 1997)

Children's Chorus & Baltimore Choral Arts Society Holiday Concert performances.

Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD

- **Performer/Actor** (June 1995)

"HMS Pinafore," Interact Theater Company

Folgers Shakespeare Theater, Washington DC

- **Choreographer** (1994)

"The Proud King," a youth workshop for the National Commission on Culture, Accra, Ghana

- **Auditioned and Accepted:** *1999-2000 Artist Rosters for the Millennium Stage and the Holiday Festival Programs*, Kennedy Center For The Performing Arts, Washington DC.

## WORKSHOP & SEMINARS

### **Resident Artist, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian (2000 – 2006)**

This program complements the museum's exhibition "Audible Artworks: Selected African Musical Instruments." Introduces students to the visual forms of African musical instruments and explores their sounds in a musical performance.

- Resident Artist, Montgomery County Jail Juvenile Offenders (2007-Present)  
organize drumming lessons for juvenile offenders once a week. Featured on ABC's Harris Heroes (July, 2015)  
Presenter (Choice Program-2006-2012)

Drum workshops for teens at risk that are enrolled in the University of Maryland Baltimore County Choice Program.

- Resident Artist, Maryland and District of Columbia Juvenile Systems (2005-2008)

Organize drumming lessons for inmates ones or twice a week for six sessions, which culminates to a performance. A very successful undertaking sponsored by foundations through Class Arts Acts, an Arts organization in Silver Spring, MD.

- **Presenter** (June - July 2001)

Dance and Drumming Workshop, Camp Dogwood, Wolfstown, VA

- **Presenter** (March 2001)

Creativity in the Classroom, Smithsonian's Discovery Theater, Washington, DC

- **Presenter** (1999 - 2003)

Stories of Ananse, Core Knowledge National Conference

Sponsored by Core Knowledge Foundation, Charlottesville, VA

1999: Orlando, Florida      2001: Boston

2002: Nashville              2003: Phoenix

2011: Orlando, Florida

- **Presenter** (May 1999)

African American Storytellers Retreat; Franklinton Center, Bricks, NC

- **Presenter** (May 1998)

Tenth Annual Conference on Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Lipman Early Childhood School and Research Institute, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

Introduction to West Africa using folk tales, dance, participatory rhythmic drumming, singing, drama, and games to stimulate developmental and creative skills and respect for others

- **Presenter** (March - April 1998)

"Drumming: The Next Generation," Hamilton Elementary School, Baltimore, MD

Under the Auspices of the Baltimore International Rhythm and Drumming Society

Introduced students to drumming principles and techniques, songs, dance and rhythms.

- **Instructor** (March 1996)

"Authentic African Music and Dance," Physical Education Department

Brockport High School, Brockport, NY

- **Instructor** (November 1995 - present)

African Music and Dance, Montessori School of Northern Virginia, Annandale, VA

- **Instructor** (1994 - 1995)

"Enhancing Ghanaian Culture Through the Arts," Dance Department

University of Maryland, College Park, MD

- **Presenter** (August 1995)

Seminar on interdisciplinary approach to arts education through storytelling, dance, drumming and singing.

Held by the Association of Music Teachers, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

Selected National and International Performance Highlights

Virgin Islands 158th Emancipation Anniversary, St Croix, (July, 2006)

Kennedy Center Millennium Stage (June 1, 2003 and February 9, 2005)

Smithsonian's Discovery Theater (July 2001, May 2002, and January 2003)

National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian, Washington, DC (July 1998, - 2004)

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (2003)

Celebrate Fairfax, Fairfax, VA (1998, 1999, 2003)

Foreign Language Teachers Association of Northern Virginia, Williamsburg, VA (January 2003)

Wolf Trap Children's Theater In the Woods, Vienna, VA (July 2000, July 2002)

Natural History Museum, Washington, DC (June 2001, June 2002)

National Geographic, Washington, DC (September 2000, 2001, 2002)

National Zoo, Washington, DC (July 2000)

Maryland African Art Museum, Columbia, MD (February 1999)

Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY (1999)

Virgin Islands 150th Emancipation Anniversary, St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, VI (July 1998)

Sankofa African Dance and Drum Ensemble, Chautauqua Amphitheater, NY (July 1997)

Smithsonian 31st Annual Festival of Folklife, Washington, DC (July 1997)

Virgin Islands Folklife Festival, St. Thomas, VI (August 1996)

Taste of DC (August 1996, 1997)

Rayburn Hall, Capitol Hill, DC (August 1995)

## **AWARDS**

Human Rights Community Award

Presented by the United Nations Association of the National Capitol Area (1998)

Maryland Arts Council Traditional Master drummer- Apprentice Award(2005)

Certificate of Appreciation

Presented by the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies (1997)

Grand-Marshall Award- City of Macon, GA. International Cherry Blossom Festival (2003)

Best Entertainment and Creative Float- City of Macon, GA. International Cherry Blossom Festival (2005)

## **PUBLICATION**

**CDs-** Wonsom Africa! Okokroko (July 2009)

"Albert Mawere Opoku, Pioneer in African Dance," *Traditions Magazine*, (2003)

CD- Agoo-Amee, Broom Broom Zoom Zoom, ASED and FRITETE(Indigenous Rhythms

From Africa)

**REFERENCES**

Mr. Rory Turner Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology and Sociology Faculty, Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability Program Goucher College, Towson MD 21204

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**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

Performing and teaching creative dramatics, traditional African dance and drumming are my calling. As a teacher, it is with passionate scholarship that I impart all that I have learned (and continue to learn) to my students.

Teaching the performing arts—whether for recreation or academic purposes—is about a shared communal experience. It is a richer experience because of the diversity of my students’ cultural backgrounds.

With a background as a royal court musician, I come to teaching with a full understanding of the creative energy each student brings to class. It is my personal philosophy that students should learn the rudiments of traditional African dance and drumming by exploring the origins of the subject matter. From here, students are strongly encouraged to specialize in one or two of the various ensembles specific to any of the ethnic groups in Africa.

The traditional method of the teacher-student relationship that I experienced as a royal court musician and dancer are the backbone of my success as a teacher. I believe that students must “experience” the experience: they must actively participate in a live dancing and drumming session for true learning to take place. This was the guiding principle of my own artistic education, and now my personal teaching philosophy. It is my belief that once the proper environment is created to tap into students’ creative energies, the work of the teacher is complete.

Kwame Ansah-Brew



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*Larry Hogan, Governor | Boyd K. Rutherford, Lieutenant Governor*



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